

We are going to eliminate the whole program to stop Iran from developing a nuclear program, and he did.

So for the Republicans to come before us today and argue that we are not being tough enough on Iran, I would like to tell them that I am not going to make excuses for Iran and its foreign policy. But there are nuclear weapons we had a chance to do something about, and some of us voted for it, some of us voted against it. I think that ought to be a matter of public record.

#### HONORING OFFICER ANDRES VASQUEZ-LASSO

Madam President, on a separate subject matter, the city of Chicago, which I represent, is a city in mourning today.

Last Thursday, Chicago police officer Andres Vasquez-Lasso was killed while responding to a domestic violence 911 call that ended in a chase and an exchange of gunfire with the suspect. Officer Vasquez-Lasso was 32 years old. He had been on the police force for 5 years. He is married. The man accused of killing him is 18 years old.

Officer Vasquez-Lasso had chased this man a short distance on foot when the man reportedly turned on him, pointed a gun at him, and killed him. That chase ended on the playground of an elementary school in the city of Chicago where neighborhood kids were playing. As the bullets flew, the children took cover under slides and other playground equipment. Officer Vasquez-Lasso was shot three times—in the arm, leg, and head.

He was the first Chicago police officer killed in the line of duty since Officer Ella French was murdered 18 months ago during a traffic stop. They had a memorial service for Officer French. My wife and I went to it. It was at St. Rita High School in the Beverly section of Chicago. I have never seen a larger outpouring of men and women in uniform come and pay tribute to this officer who was killed in a traffic stop.

I was there with my wife, and we had a personal feeling about the occasion once we went inside, saw her family, and heard more about her life. I got to know her mom. And when the time came, we picked a program to help police across the United States, and we are working to name it after her in her honor for serving not only the city of Chicago but the country in protecting us. Sadly, here we are again.

Officer Vasquez-Lasso just didn't protect the Southwest Side neighborhood where he served. He actually lived there. He and his wife had bought a home only 2 and a half miles from where he was killed about a year and a half ago. And I want to say clearly for the record something that needs to be said: Officer Vasquez-Lasso was an immigrant to this country. He came here from Colombia. He became a citizen and became a police officer, and he gave his life for the people who live in this country.

On this Wednesday night, police officers, other first responders, and com-

munity members lined the streets to salute the ambulance carrying his body as it drove slowly from the hospital where he died to the county medical examiner's office.

On Thursday, black bunting draped the entrance to the 8th district headquarters where Officer Vasquez-Lasso was assigned. Several vigils have been held around the city of Chicago since his death. The largest was a candlelight prayer vigil Thursday evening in Hale Park, attended by the officer's wife and mother. Hundreds of police officers, community members, and friends came out to pay their respects. A friend at the prayer vigil recalled that Officer Vasquez-Lasso was "always a proper man." A fellow officer said, "He was always smiling."

Today, a memorial stands on the block where he was shot down. People drop off flowers and notes and other tributes. A rosary hangs on the fence. Illinois Governor J.P. Pritzker has ordered all flags in our State to fly at half-staff until Officer Vasquez-Lasso is laid to rest on Thursday.

These are especially difficult times to be a member of law enforcement. A growing arsenal of high-powered guns in the hands of criminals and domestic abusers makes policing more dangerous than it has ever been. Domestic violence calls are always fraught with danger for police, victims, and innocent people standing by.

At the suspect's bail hearing, Judge Mary Marubio noted that danger when she said:

This case, from start to finish, it begins in violence and it ends in violence.

The director of a local domestic violence prevention organization said, "Your heart breaks because it was all so preventable."

Madam President, for the sake of law enforcement officers who protect our communities and the victims of violence, we must do more to break the cycle of violence that kills far too many and leaves many more scarred. We must—must—do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and others who flatly should not have them.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act that Congress passed last year in the wake of the horrific Uvalde school shooting made important progress, but more is needed to protect our communities and our law enforcement officers.

In closing, I want to offer my condolences to Officer Vasquez-Lasso's family, especially his wife Milena Estepa, his mother Rocio Lasso, his sister, and niece, as well as his fellow officers in the Chicago Police Department, and his many, many friends.

Officer Vasquez-Lasso gave his life protecting his community. He was protecting the children on that playground and the families living in the community that he personally called home.

We join the city of Chicago in saluting his courage and mourning his loss.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, last week, pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly announced that it was going to lower the price of its insulin product. It is called Humalog. They are going to lower it dramatically by 70 percent and cap the out-of-pocket costs for insulin at \$35 a month. After two decades of price gouging, this is a major relief for more than 7 million patients—more than 200,000 living in my State of Illinois—who depend on insulin every day to stay alive.

But, despite the importance of this announcement, I won't be sending thank-you cards to the executives of this pharmaceutical company. You see, it was a century ago—100 years ago—when basic forms of insulin were discovered. The Nobel Prize-winning researchers who pioneered that discovery surrendered the patent rights—their property rights—in this new discovery for \$1. Why? To prevent profiteering on this lifesaving medication.

Now fast-forward almost 100 years to 1996. Eli Lilly introduces its insulin drug Humalog. They set the price of a vial of this insulin at \$21. It made sense, as it only cost a few dollars to manufacture. But in the years since 1996, Eli Lilly prioritized profits over patients. The same vial of insulin that Eli Lilly first sold for \$21 was now being sold for \$300. Eli Lilly raised the price more than 30 separate times.

What happened to the same drug, made by the same company, sold in Canada? It was only \$40. But it was \$300 in the United States. Is it any wonder that Eli Lilly generated more than \$22 billion in revenue from insulin alone in 2014 and 2018?

Let me repeat that. There was \$22 billion in revenue during that 4-year period.

Let's be clear. During the same time, Eli Lilly spent \$1.5 billion on sales and marketing for insulin. Try to turn on the television set and get away with not seeing a pharmaceutical commercial from this company and so many others. Eli Lilly spent four times more than it spent on research for marketing this product and others.

The company's profit-taking on this life-or-death drug has had deadly consequences. When the price went up to \$300 a month, many people just couldn't afford it. More than 1 million Americans report having to ration or cut back doses of insulin—an extremely dangerous gamble.

I received a letter from one of my constituents from Palos Park, who faced that. His name is Phil. He is 73 years old. Phil told me he has had to skip insulin injections because of the cost. He wrote that he was "anxiously awaiting lower prescription prices."

Well, there is good news for Phil and a lot of other Americans. You don't have to wait any longer. Last year, the Democrats lowered the cost of prescription drugs.

Why didn't I say that the Senate lowered the cost? Because not a single Republican would vote for it—not one.

We enacted a new penalty to stop Pharma's outrageous price hikes. We enabled Medicare to finally negotiate lower prices. We also made vaccines, like the shingles vaccine, which costs nearly \$400 a course, entirely free for seniors under Medicare. We have said that no senior on Medicare will pay more than \$2,000 out-of-pocket for medications in a year. Finally, we capped the price of insulin at \$35 a month.

All of these measures were part of the Inflation Reduction Act, which President Biden signed into law and Republican Members of the House are now saying they want to repeal in its entirety. Clearly, our legislation put Big Pharma on notice. It let them know their days of price gouging are numbered.

We are not finished. There are now two very different visions of healthcare in America: the Democratic vision and the Republican vision. Instead of voting to cap insulin prices, Republicans blocked our proposal that would have applied the \$35 premium to all Americans and not just senior citizens. We needed 10 Republican votes on the floor. We got 7. And get this. Now many Republicans are talking about repealing the whole law and raising drug prices—exactly what America does not need.

As long as we are in charge in the Senate and have a President in the White House, we won't let it happen. In fact, we want to work with Republicans, if they are willing, to do more. Let's extend the \$35 insulin cap to all other diabetic patients in America. Is that a radical idea? Senator WARNOCK of Georgia has a bill to do this. The question: Are the Republicans willing to join us? That is what it takes to pass it.

While we are at it, let's put an end to Pharma's scheme to unjustifiably extend monopolies and harm patients' access to drugs. Last month, the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, reported out five bipartisan bills to address patent abuse and other tactics that prevent generic drugs from coming on the market, keeping prices high for American families.

The full Senate should take up and pass these bills, and we should pass the bill that I have introduced with the Republican from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, to address the outrageous direct-to-consumer drug ads that we all see on television.

We all see them. On average, every American who watches TV is going to see nine drug ads every single day. How many countries allow the advertising of drugs on television? Two, the United States of America and New Zealand. Go figure. Pharma spent \$6 billion a year flooding the airwaves so that the average American sees all of those ads that promote the most expensive drugs in the world. Pharma thinks, if they bombard you enough with ads so that you finally get to the point you might be able to spell Xarelto, you will insist to

your doctor that that is the blood thinner you want even though there may be less expensive alternatives that are just as effective.

Well, Senator GRASSLEY and I have a radical idea. If they can put all of those disclaimers on those ads and give you all the information and say things that sound nonsensical on their face—if you are allergic to this drug, don't take this drug—how do I know I am allergic? Well, if you put all of that on there, they ought to be able to put for 5 seconds on every ad the cost of the drug—the cost of the drug.

You would be amazed. Some of these drugs cost \$9,000 and \$10,000 a month, and they are peddling them on the air like they are just pretty common, pretty affordable. They are not. If they are advertising a drug and rattling off side effects, they should disclose the price up front. It is a basic step toward transparency for patients. Even former President Trump agreed with us on this one. He supported our efforts.

I am glad we capped the price of insulin, but there is a lot more to do. I hope it will be bipartisan. If it isn't bipartisan, it is going nowhere. I hope the Republicans join us as people across America celebrate the affordability of prescription drugs for Medicare recipients.

#### FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Madam President, when I was a college student in 1965—there, I have given away my age—there was this discussion one night about getting in the car here, at Georgetown University in Washington, and having three or four of us drive down to Selma, AL, to participate in the march. Well, things intervened, like work schedules and classes, and we didn't do it, and I have regretted it ever since. I wasn't there for the March from Selma, which was commemorated just this past weekend with President Biden going to Selma, but I did get to the city of Selma, AL, on a fateful morning.

Congressman John Lewis, whom I served with in the House of Representatives—one of the real civil rights heroes of my generation—took a group of us down to Selma, AL. Part of the trip was to march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which he had done and had almost lost his life in the process. At the last minute, I had to go back to Illinois, and I had to cancel and catch an early morning plane to take the trip back home.

I told John Lewis: Maybe, next time, I will get a chance to do it.

He said: There may not be a next time. So let's you and I go over there.

We got up at 6 a.m. and drove over to Selma, AL. In the early morning fog, I walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with John Lewis by my side. He pointed out where he was standing when they beat him down with a nightstick and almost killed him. They fractured his skull.

I have thought about that ever since. When I think of Selma, AL, I think of John surviving that and the amazing

courage which he showed. It sometimes escapes us as to why that march was taking place. It sounds like a bunch of people who just wanted to get public attention. There was a lot more to the story.

There is a woman who publishes a column almost every single day—free for those who want to read it. Her name is Heather Cox Richardson. I have come to know her a little bit. She visited our Senate Democratic caucus just a few weeks ago. She published a column on March 5, Sunday, which spoke about Selma, AL, and what was behind that march. It was all about registering African Americans to vote in the State of Alabama.

"In the 1960s," she wrote, "despite the fact that Black Americans outnumbered white Americans among the 29,500 people who lived in Selma, Alabama, the city's voting rolls were 99% white. So, in 1963, local Black organizers launched a voter registration drive."

"... in neighboring Mississippi, Ku Klux Klan members worked with local law enforcement officers to murder three voting rights organizers and dispose of their bodies."

"To try to hold back the white supremacists, Congress"—and the Senate and the House—"passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, designed in part to make it possible for Black Americans to register to vote. In Selma, a judge stopped voter registration meetings by prohibiting public gatherings of more than two people."

To call attention to the crisis in their city, they invited Dr. Martin Luther King to come to Selma.

"King and other prominent Black leaders arrived in January 1965, and for seven weeks, Black residents made a new push to register to vote."

The county sheriff in the Selma area, James Clark, "arrested almost 2,000 of them on a variety of charges, including contempt of court and parading without a permit. A federal court ordered Clark not to interfere with orderly registration."

There were some heroic Federal judges who risked their lives and reputations, and one of them was Frank Johnson. John Lewis told me about him as we walked over the Pettus Bridge.

But "a federal court ordered Clark not to interfere with orderly registration, so he forced Black applicants to stand in line for hours" and subjected them to a "literacy" test before they were allowed to register to vote. Not one single person passed.

"Then, on February 18, white police officers, including local police, sheriff's deputies, and Alabama state troopers, beat and shot an unarmed man, 26-year-old Jimmie Lee Jackson, who was marching for voting rights in Marion, Alabama," about 25 miles from Selma. "Jackson had run into a restaurant for shelter along with his mother when the police started rioting."